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The Role and Usage of Apps and Instant Messaging in Religious Mass Events

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Over the last few years, large events have conferred great importance on Event Management, or the management of mass meetings. In the religious sector, for centuries, pilgrimages have been a clear example of mass events of a spiritual nature. Due to globalization and increased mobility, recent times have seen the multiplication of international events without a fixed location: Taizé encounters, Kumbh Mela (India), and World Youth Day are all good examples of this. These events imply at least a threefold spiritual, organizational and touristic challenge, and success in each one of these areas contributes to the favourable result of the others.

Due to the particular nature of these events, which can mobilize millions of people in just a few days, communication is fundamental. In this sense, the development of mobile technology allows for direct communication with the individual and an unprecedented capacity for diffusion, especially by means of apps and instant messaging, which are two of the most-used channels available on these devices.

This paper offers a reflection on the prospects and management of information via smartphones during these large religious events. As a practical case, we will study the beatification of the Catholic bishop Álvaro del Portillo held in Madrid in September 2014, in a ceremony that drew more than 250,000 people from over 70 countries.

Key Words: event management, pilgrimages, mobile technology, instant messaging

Introduction

Events are instruments of communication in which one desires to transmit a message. At the same time, they prove to be occasions for transmitting the identity of an institution, bringing together its members and fulfilling some of its objectives (de la Cierva 2014), as is the case, in a particular way, with events of a religious character. In this area, over recent years, increased mobility and globalization have contributed great momentum to the participation of the faithful in spiritual encounters on an international scale (Reader, 2007; Schnell & Pali, 2013). The thousands of people mobilized by the Pope during his visits throughout the world, the crowds of Muslim pilgrims who gather in Mecca each year, or the masses of faithful Hindus who converge on the Ganges on the occasion of the Kumbh Mela, may all be taken as good examples. Although pilgrimages are part of a centuries-old tradition and a practice common to many religions, in recent decades travelling for spiritual reasons has increased - also thanks to improvement and cost reduction in transportation - and represents a considerable share of international tourism (Olsen and Timothy 2006). It is

estimated that every year approximately 600 million national and international religious and spiritual trips are made in the world, of which 40% take place in Europe (Marine-Roig, 2014). In fact, in the 21st Century some of the major touristic destinations are linked to a religious event, place or person (Raj & Griffin, 2015).

Since the public which participates in these events possesses different cultural and idiomatic backgrounds, communication is a key element for the success of the event. In this sense, the internet and diffusion of smartphone use today facilitate a channel of connection that was unimaginable until a few years ago. The employment of these tools in large-scale religious events has been seldom analysed in scientific literature up to this point (Muaremi *et al.* 2014).

The aim of this article is to analyse how big religious events can take advantage of new technologies to improve the spiritual and touristic experience of the attendants. It proposes to interpret some of the needs that arise from this specific type of religious-touristic event on a mass scale, and specifically how mobile

technology can help to better both the experience for the visitor as well as the organizational management of the encounter. As there is not much detailed experience and literature on the use of mobile technology on religious events, a case analysis will be used to suggest some conclusions.

Literature Review

Events have been defined as occurrences that take place in a determined place and time, under certain determined circumstances, and should be recognized by rituals or ceremonies with the objective of satisfying the specific needs of a public (Goldblatt, 2002). More recently, Mossberg (2000) proposed three criteria for defining an event: it is a one-time or recurring event of limited duration, which is held no more frequently than once a year; it has a program, an organizing body, a number of participants and it is open to the public and; it is developed primarily to enhance the awareness, appeal and profitability of the host city / region / country as a tourist destination in addition to intrinsic objectives, such as religion, sports and culture. We have chosen this definition because it clearly underlines the touristic implications that every event entails.

Recently, events have become a topic of study for the academic community under the denomination of *Event Studies*. According to their content, they have been classified under the following denominations: cultural celebration, business and trade, sport competition, political and state, arts and entertainment, educational and scientific and private events (Getz, 2008). Other authors propose different classifications (Silvers, 2003; Bowdin *et al.*, 2006). It is the opinion of the authors of this work that the category of 'religious event' could also be added; although it may well hold elements in common with a cultural celebration (Raj & Griffin, 2015), it implies specific delimiting aspects as well. From a practical viewpoint, the organization of all of these events is known as *Event Management* (Getz, 2008).

Mass Religious Events

Tourism and religious events are very much related (MacCannell, 1999; Cohen, 1979; Turner & Turner, 1978; Campo, 1998; Timothy & Boyd, 2003). In fact, the largest events in the world in terms of actual attendance are religion-related: i.e., the Hajj in Mecca (Saudi Arabia), which gathers 3.4 million Muslims

each year (Raj & Griffin, 2015); the Kumbh Mela (India) which is reported to attract in the region of 10 million worshipers; or World Youth Day which attract up to 4 million young Catholics. Whoever participates in religious tourism seeks elements that go beyond sensorial perceptions: he or she does not merely want to see or know things, but rather to have a spiritual experience. As Raj, Walters & Rashid (2013) affirm, the gatherings of people share six objective components: faith, feelings, culture, community, ceremony and contact.

At the same time, the behaviour of pilgrims in modern mass pilgrimages is difficult to distinguish from other types of tourism performance (Cohen, 1979). In most of the literature, tourists and pilgrims are considered to be similar, whether there is a distinction in motivations and goals. Vukonić (1996) and Shackley (2001), for example, note that although pilgrimages are triggered by religious beliefs, if they are analysed as events, they contain characteristics that are not exclusively motivated by religion but also by culture, relationships and entertainment. Specific studies on pilgrimages induce some authors to deny that pilgrims should be considered tourists (Olsen & Timothy, 2006), or to affirm that a visit to a sacred place or event may not be due to religious reasons (Nolan & Nolan, 1992; Woodward, 2004). Smith (1992) situates pilgrimage as the most radical format of religious tourism, in opposition to secular tourism.

In the field of event organization, events of a religious character are undergoing a process of change, and we are experiencing a boom of one-time religious events that are linked not to a physical site, but rather to a person or a theme (Blackwell, 2007; Pritchard, 2015). Most of these religious events are small and medium sized (Bowdin *et al.*, 2006; Rubio & de Esteban, 2008; Cerutti & Piva, 2015), but some gather large crowds from all around the world. In the West alone the encounters of the *Community of Taizé*, the *Kirchentag* in Germany, *World Youth Days*, *Eucharistic Congresses*, or the *World Meeting of Families* are all examples. These are periodic events that attract people from all five continents, and which change location for every occasion.

A special section within this type of event is constituted by beatifications or canonizations: public events in which the Catholic Church declares publicly that the life of a deceased faithful is an example of Christian life. It is a public recognition that this person followed the counsels proposed by Jesus Christ in the

Gospel in his or her own life (Vatican Council II, 1964, n.40). While ceremonies of canonization are held in Rome and are celebrated by the Pope, beatifications are typically held in the city where the faithful who is proposed as a model lived. This implies an organizational challenge as well as a touristic opportunity for the place that hosts the event.

Based upon the number of faithful who are familiar with and devoted to the new Blessed, such events can be minor or massive. The beatifications of Mother Theresa of Calcutta, Pope John Paul II or Padre Pio de Pietralcina, which were held in Rome because of the universality of their protagonists, are examples of the attraction to a singular religious event by millions of people of different nationalities. Indeed, massively attended beatifications (or canonizations) may be considered, along with pilgrimages, one of the principle motives that drive Catholic tourism (Fedele, 2014; Norman & Johnson, 2011).

These mass movements also represent an opportunity for the economic development of the region that welcomes them (Jackowski & Smith, 1992), even though this type of event typically involves a brief stay of only two or three days (Rinschede, 1992). From what has been said until now, we can conclude that mass religious events such as beatifications have a threefold dimension: they are simultaneously a spiritual experience, an organized event and an occasion for tourism.

Mobile Communication: Apps and Instant Messaging

If, as we have affirmed, communication is as fundamental for the betterment of the experience of the participant in a specific event as it is for the organization of the event itself (Getz, 2005), then it is opportune to study which are the most appropriate channels of communication. Recent literature suggests that modern channels may be found in the boom of 'smart tourism', which employs smart tools (ICT) in order to offer better services and experiences (Kim, Park & Morrison, 2008; Gretzel, 2011; Molz, 2012; Liu, 2015; Neuhofer, Buhalis & Ladkin, 2015). The positive impact of Social Media reviews on a touristic destination after a religious event has already been demonstrated by Marine-Roig (2014). In the case analysed by Marine-Roig, the total number of online travel reviews about Barcelona's temple of La Sagrada Familia multiplied sixfold - with a general positive overview - the year after the public consecration of the site by Pope Benedict XVI.

Mobile technology should be considered as one of the most important elements of the 'new mobilities paradigm' (Sheller & Urry, 2006), which analyzes the materialities, automobilities and technologies used in society to improve the tourism experience. As new technologies have changed the relationship with time (people are 'always on') and space (not linked to a place), their usage analysis could help, for instance, to follow the physical movements of crowds (Hannam, Sheller & Urry, 2006), and to get to know their requests, needs and behaviours.

Tourists are increasingly incorporating mobile devices on their journeys and interacting with distant human and personal networks. Advancements in mobile bandwidth and the expansion of Wi-Fi throughout public spaces allow for fluid and almost constant connectivity. These technological advances allow for greater flexibility of a tourist's paths through time and space, including new opportunities of micro-coordination, collective planning, and more open time schedules (Hannam, Butler & Paris 2014). Tourist can stay connected, but can also collaborate, interact and share experiences or materials (photos, videos, etc.), creating a 'virtual travel' parallel to the physical one. A presence on both the virtual and the physical spheres changes the tourism experience enormously (White & White 2007). As Hannam, Butler and Paris (2014:179) state:

advancements in mobile, social, communication, and location based technologies have augmented and mediated tourists' senses and experiences of space through emotional, aesthetical, informational, playful and social enhancements.

The use of ICT in religious pilgrimages has been the object of different studies (Hill-Smith, 2011; Macwilliams, 2013). Generally speaking, analysis of mobile device use in the realm of religious events with mass turnover serves to prove the many advantages that it offers at different levels. In this study, we concentrate on smartphones as a tool of direct communication with the attendees of a religious event. Smartphones have spread rapidly and profoundly throughout the population (The World Bank, 2011). Thanks to the potentialities and services offered by mobile applications such as geolocalization (Gretzel, 2011), augmented reality or multimediality, their use goes beyond simple interaction between subjects. Campbell and Kwak (2011) have divided smartphone usage into three areas: logistical (trip organization, schedules etc.); relational (consultation, exchange of

photos, opinions and critiques etc.) and; informative (knowledge of the area, prior preparation, nearby destinations, special offers etc.). All of these areas are applicable to the sector of tourism.

On the other hand, although not among the main usages, some studies have demonstrated that smartphones are also employed in order to improve the touristic (Tussyadiah & Zach, 2012) and religious experience (Campbell, Altenhofen, Bellar & Cho, 2014; El-Sayed, Greenhill & Westrup, 2015; Salisbury, 2015). Nevertheless, it needs to be considered that most of the studies about mobile technology and religious events conducted until now have focused on a technical analysis of people's displacement (Muaremi *et al.*, 2014).

Among the capabilities that a smartphone offers regarding the preparation and celebration of an event, we focus our study on two of them: Mobile applications (Apps) and Mobile Instant Messaging (mIM).

Mobile Apps

Apps - the abbreviation for Application Software - are computer programs designed to be run on a mobile device (smartphone or tablet). Their efficacy in tourism is constantly growing (Dickinson *et al.*, 2014; Balandin *et al.*, 2014; Lu, Mao, Wang, & Hu, 2015). In a short time, mobile services focused on tourism have multiplied: Apps about travel and transport, social networks for tourists and Apps for reading *in situ* about touristic objects (*the internet of things*), are a few examples. Apps have become one of the most influential elements regarding the modification of behaviour and decisions of travellers (Höpken, Fuchs, Zanker, & Beer, 2010; Frommer's Unlimited, 2011), especially among those users who distrust tour packages and prefer to make individual arrangements (Buhalis & Law, 2008).

Communication via smartphone allows for a very high level of diffusion and efficacy, since it permits reach to the individual device of each user directly, bypassing the intervention of other mediators (television, radio, billboards, personal computers, etc.). Moreover, if we keep in mind that prior experience is an important factor in the visitor's attitude towards a certain event or place (Kerstetter & Cho, 2004), an App that helps the individual improve their preparation and planning for an event in the days or weeks leading up to it, appears to be a powerful tool of communication.

On the other hand, from the organizational point of view, it is opportune to keep in mind the complexity of a religious mass event: large attendance, cultural and linguistic diversity, and a host site probably with no prior experience of this kind of event. All of these elements contain high possibilities for generating a crisis. In this context, mobile technology allows for important alternatives. In fact, different new technologies, mainly Social Media, have been used by tourists when seeking help by collective intelligence during moments of crisis (Paris and Rubin, 2013).

Mobile Instant Messaging

The second tool in our study is Mobile Instant Messaging (mIM); the capability of using instant messaging (IM) services from a smartphone or tablet. This is a form of one-to-one or one-to-many multimedia synchronous communication (Ogara, Koh & Prybutok, 2014). Mobile IM allows users to find out the state of their conversational partners (present or absent) and to simultaneously exchange messages, either text or visual, with one or many interlocutors. The majority of mIM applications are free (i.e., Whatsapp, Skype, Hangout, Telegram), although they require data or Wi-Fi connection to the Internet.

Instant messaging can serve to establish contact one-to-one or one-to-many. In massive events, personalized attention proves impossible, and only one-to-many communication by means of officially compiled distribution lists (databases of cell phone numbers of users who have consented to receive messages) remains the most realistic possibility of interaction. Messaging contributes to increasing the organizer's feel of proximity with users (and vice versa). It enables information to be offered in real time, amplifying the amount of contents and providing the right interpretation of discourse, as well as becoming a very powerful tool in the eventuality of a crisis. Previous studies on the use of instant messaging have demonstrated its effectiveness in high-risk situations (Small, Becker, Cáceres & Urbanek, 2015).

Event Information Management and Mobile Technology

With the aim of standardizing the tasks of planning, organizing, and managing events, Goldblatt (2002) broke *Event Management* down into five areas of work: administration, design, marketing, operations and risk analysis. Communications plays a fundamental role in the latter three areas (García &

Table 1 : Classification of Informative Tasks that can be Carried Out by Means of Mobile Technology at a Mass Event

Mobile Communication	Event Management Task		
App	Marketing	Operations	Risks Analysis
	Materials: spiritual and liturgical texts, religious songs, historical context, promotional videos, catechesis.	Communications: press releases, newsletter.	Health & Safety: information about health conditions, weather forecast.
	Merchandise: logo, HD photos, product sales.	Infrastructure: who we are, staff, organizational areas.	Security: FAQ, personal data.
	Sponsorship: information about sponsors.	Logistics: maps, schedules, documentation.	Contacts: police, medical numbers.
		Participants: registration (if needed).	
mIM	Materials: breaking news.		Emergency: crisis alerts.
(based on the Event Management classification of Silvers, 2003)			

Fernández, 2014): promoting an event, overseeing its execution and managing the possible risks involved are activities in which it is necessary to be informed and to receive information. Based on the proposal of Silvers (2003), we have selected different tasks of information management for which the mobile telephone may be of use in the case of a massive religious event (Table 1).

As Table 1 shows, Apps allow for the execution of many more tasks and in much greater detail than mIM. Nonetheless, the strength of mIM is its immediacy of communication and its capability to redirect, by way of links, to many other sources (official webpage, social networks, other websites, etc.). It also proves to be an effective instrument for information reminders, in addition to generating a unity of the discourse.

Table 2 details some of the contents that an App can offer in a mass religious event which (as previously mentioned), is simultaneously a spiritual experience, an organized event and a touristic opportunity. An App

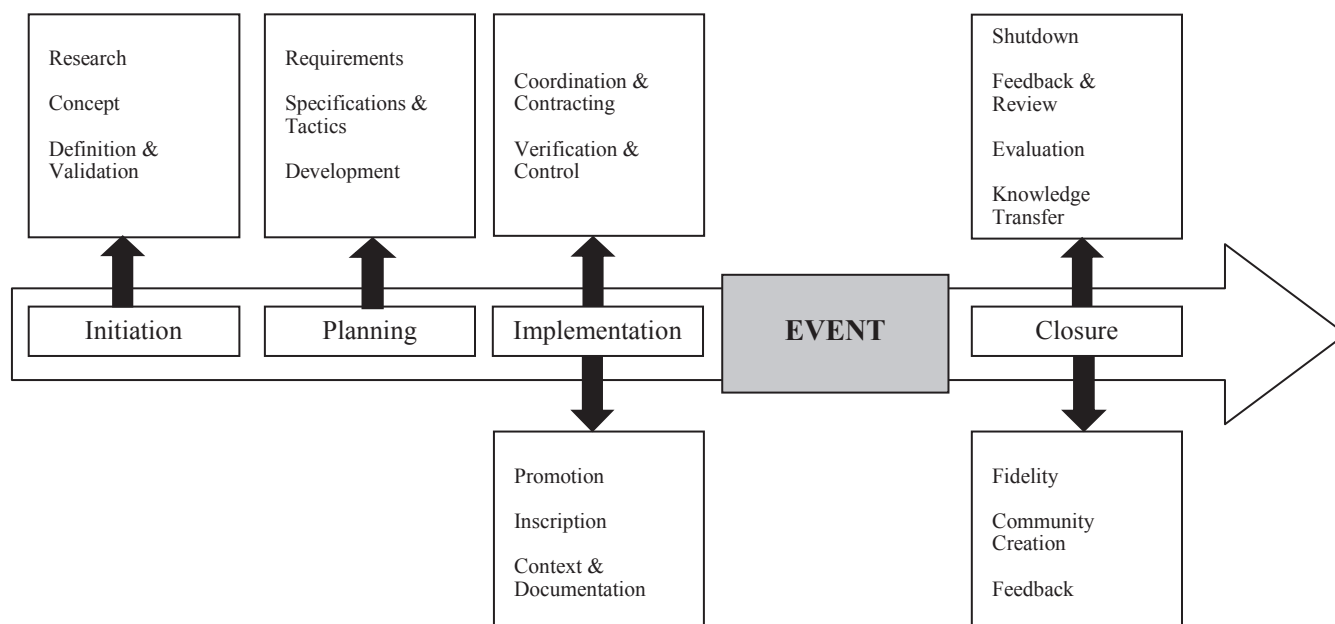
model that is linked to a large religious event could offer contents related to the three general goals. (We are not considering here instant messaging, due to the reasons mentioned above, i.e., breaking news and emergency issues).

Another of the informative advantages of an App is that it allows for relational continuity between users after the event. Figure 1 presents Silvers' graphic representation of *Event Management Evolution* (2003) with the addition (in the lower part) of the mission that communications can generally accomplish in each phase by means of the smartphone.

After presenting the main literature and explaining how mass events of a religious character may be combined with communications, by means of the mobile telephone, we proceed to the study of a practical case: a religious event celebrated in 2014, in the capital of Spain.

Table 2 : Contents of an App Linked to a Religious Event, Organized According to Goals.

	Goals		
	Spiritual	Organizational	Touristic
Contents	Lectures and Prayers	Timetables	Restaurants, museums, etc.
	Devotional stories	Event Maps (geolocalization)	Maps
	Event Info (biographical, historical etc.)	Contact Info	Guided Tours related to the event
		News	Nearby Touristic Destinations
			Promotions

Figure 1 : Evolution of Event Management

(based on Silvers 2003)

Methodology

Of the many tools that new technologies make available (websites, social media, wikis...) we will centre our study on Apps and Instant Messaging, through a quantitative and qualitative analysis. This research combines three methods: first, the structure and content analysis of the technical tools (App and mM messages); second, in-depth interviews with the people in charge of communications for the event, which were carried out on January 11th and 13th 2014; and third, a quantitative analysis of statistical resources.

The two first methods allowed us to make a qualitative analysis. We studied the App and mM following the classification of the informative tasks (Table 1) and crossing them with the objectives proposed in Table 2. The amount of quantitative data collected, in the third case, was very limited and prudential judgement was required in order to establish general conclusions. At the same time, the diversity and limited number of mass-religious gatherings in the Catholic Church, make comparing events difficult. However, the case analysis seems very useful to propose a model for future religious events.

Case Analysis: Blessed Álvaro del Portillo

On September 27, 2014 Catholic bishop Álvaro del Portillo was beatified in Madrid. On June 28, 2012, Pope Benedict XVI announced that the study of his exemplary life, as well as the devotion that thousands of people paid to him and the inexplicable cure of a newborn in Chile that occurred in 2002, opened the door for the beatification of Álvaro del Portillo.

Álvaro del Portillo was a Spanish engineer, born in 1914 (Coverdale, 2014). He was the greatest collaborator of Saint Josemaría Escrivá, the founder of Opus Dei, a Catholic institution that proposes the pursuit of holiness through work as well as social and family life. Currently 90,000 people, mostly married, belong to this organization across the five continents. Upon the death of the Founder, del Portillo occupied his place at the head of the Prelature of Opus Dei^[1] until his own death in 1994.

1) A detailed explanation of the Prelature of Opus Dei is not object of this article. For more information about Opus Dei, we point out: Ocariz, F. e Illanes, J.L., *Opus Dei in the Church*, Scepter, Princeton 1995; Fuenmayor, A., Gómez Iglesias, V., Illanes, J.L., *The canonical path of Opus Dei*, Scepter, Princeton 1994; and Allen, J., *Opus Dei: An Objective Look Behind the Myths and Reality of the Most Controversial Force in the Catholic Church*, Doubleday, New York 2005.

Figure 2 : Photographs from the Beatification of Álvaro del Portillo, Madrid, 27th September 2013

1) The crowd seen from the altar



2) More than 250.000 participants



3) Image of the stage with the picture of Blessed Alvaro del Portillo



4) Pilgrims using mobile devices in the religious event

Photos Courtesy of the Information Office of Opus Dei

Together with the date of the beatification ceremony, it was also announced that it would take place in Madrid, the birthplace of the future Blessed. From the organization and communications perspective, the event appeared as a challenge for the chosen city. It would be a near two-hour long ceremony and estimations calculated that it would draw some 250,000 people from more than 70 different countries.

Rome, the capital of Catholicism, is a city that is normally used for large ceremonies: it is enough to recall recent canonizations such as the one of the above

-mentioned Josemaría Escrivá (October 6, 2002) or John Paul II (April 27, 2014), or the beatification of Mother Theresa of Calcutta (October 19, 2003), all of which welcomed around 300,000 to 500,000 people in St. Peter's Square. These liturgical events are not music concerts or a protests, and so have their own organisational particularities which, with the passage of time, Rome has learned to resolve. An event of this type and magnitude in Madrid, however, represented a novelty, and generated not small organizational problems. Just one previous experience could be considered similar: World Youth Day, a Catholic event

that gathered one million youth with Pope Benedict XVI in Madrid in 2011 (De la Cierva, 2014).

Communication for this 2014 event needed to serve three objectives:

1. Contributing to the proper organisation of the event, keeping in mind the different countries of origin of the participants as well as the novelty that it represented for the city;
2. Making known the figure of Álvaro del Portillo;
3. Taking advantage of 250,000 participants in order to promote Madrid as a place linked to both the future Blessed and the history of Opus Dei.

This final objective was the most closely connected to the touristic promotion of the city.

Local government representatives actively collaborated with event organizers from its inception. On the one hand, there was a need to ensure that the concentration of thousands of people would not interfere in the functioning of a city and a metropolitan area with eight million inhabitants; on the other hand, the beatification represented an exceptional occasion to promote tourism in Madrid and to foster consumption during those days. The communications plan was conditioned by the nature of the event: since it was a one-time event, it would not be progressively bettered by the introduction of improvements, as happens in regular events (for example, annual conventions).

‘Álvaro del Portillo’ App

This is not the place to describe in detail the communications plan that was launched for the whole event; rather, we will concentrate on two of the tools that carried out a significant part of the communications management of this one-time ceremony: a specific App, and the instant messaging application *Whatsapp*.

The ‘Álvaro del Portillo’ App was created with the intention of being a useful informational support for the attendees of the beatification. In addition to containing news and spiritual texts, the App offered useful information, which was periodically updated thanks to an RSS (Rich Site Summary) feed to a site created specifically for the ceremony.^[2] Thanks to the App, attendees knew how to travel from the airport to the esplanade where the beatification would take place, were informed about the definitive schedule, could rely on a map in order to move around the site, and had access to many other pieces of useful information.

The App also proposed to extend the experience of the pilgrimage to the city of Madrid. In this way, the event was not reduced to the place of the religious ceremony alone, located more than ten kilometres from the historic centre of the Spanish capital. A map from Google Maps included in the application allowed pilgrims to follow a route along the streets of the city and visit the places that were historically linked to the new Blessed. Locations included explanations recalling episodes of the life of Álvaro del Portillo that had taken place at that site. The path brought thousands of pilgrims to emblematic places in the city: the Museo del Prado, the Paseo de la Castellana, Santiago Bernabeu Stadium, and the Plaza Mayor were some of the most-visited spots.

The fact that many of the international attendees would not have data coverage on their mobiles was also kept in mind. For this reason, much of the content could be downloaded ahead of time - along with the App - on the users’ smartphones. This was the case for the life story of the Blessed and some of the spiritual texts that he wrote, as well as for the texts necessary to follow the religious ceremony. This decision saved a significant amount of money that would have been spent on printing physical copies of the booklets for the Mass (the ceremony book was downloaded 290,218 times).

The ‘*Álvaro del Portillo*’ App is nourished by four sources: the official website of Opus Dei; a website created specifically for the event; the information already contained in the downloaded App and; other sources (such as *Google Maps* or *Youtube*).

The App was also created with another intention: extending its usage beyond the beatification celebrated in September. Indeed, once pilgrims had it on their cell phone with the intention of preparing for the event and started to rely on it for useful information, it was hoped that a high percentage of them would retain it even after the event has ended. In its first version (the App was updated on December 20, 2014), it was clearly divided into two parts: one that was not time-linked and another that was connected to the event. The App’s

2) These and other data came from two main official sources of information: the director of the Press Office of the Beatification of Msgr. Álvaro del Portillo, Teresa Sádaba (interviewed on January 11th, 2015), and the producer of the App, Fernando Moreno Ramiro (interviewed on January 13th, 2015). More information on the App: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/developer?id=Fernando%20Moreno%20Ramiro&hl=it>

Table 3. Analysis of the structure and content of the 'Álvaro del Portillo' App

Sections	Function	Content	Informative Goal	Technical Resources	Event Phase
Useful info	Marketing, Risks	Maps: public transportation, city, event site; visas; schedules; weather forecasts.	Organizational; Touristic	Google Maps (Geolocalization); Images; Text; API	Pre-event; Event
How to Help	Marketing	Donations: bank account information and online donation	Organizational	Text; API	Pre-event
Registrations	Operations	Online registrations; information about participation at the ceremonies.	Organizational	Text; API	Pre-event
Press	Operations	Contact information for journalists; resources; releases.	Organizational	Text; Images (Flickr); Videos (Youtube)	Pre-event; Event
News	Operations	Current information; videos; photo galleries.	Organizational; Touristic; Spiritual	Text; Images; Videos; Google Maps	Pre-event
Committee	Operations	Contact info by region and country.	Organizational	Text	Pre-event
Who is Fr. Álvaro?	Marketing	Information about the Blessed; Spiritual writings: spiritual videos and audio.	Spiritual	Texts; Audio; Images; Videos; Google Maps	Pre-event; Event; Post-event
What was his life like?	Marketing	Historical texts; walking tours; social initiatives.	Spiritual; Touristic	Text; Images; Videos; Google Maps	Pre-event; Event; Post-event
Downloads	Operations, Marketing	Spiritual songs; prayer texts; devotional material; ceremony program; tourist guides of Madrid and surrounding areas.	Organizational; Spiritual; Touristic	Audio; Text; Images	Pre-event; Event; Post-event
Did you know...?	Risks	Useful information in Q&A form	Organizational; Touristic	Text	Pre-event

practical and liturgical information related to the ceremony is presented in Table 3:

Different metrics and sources could be used to calculate the dissemination and impact of the App. Following the classic 4 R's of the marketing (Reach, Resonance, Reaction and Recommendation), the Reach could be determined by downloads of the App itself (Table 4). In the Resonance dimension, the metrics would be given by the number of launches of the App, the number of content downloads or the use of discount coupons and advertisements. In the case of the Reaction, metrics are given by user retention of the App, and the most viewed or quit screens. Finally, concerning the Recommendation an analysis could be assessed through personal interviews of the participants or through reviews of the App in Google Play and the iTunes store. Most of these metrics could be obtained using software for analytics (i.e. *Mixpanel*, *Google Analytics*, *Optimizely*).

'Álvaro del Portillo' on Whatsapp

Regarding instant messaging, a phone number was acquired in order to use the application *WhatsApp*.

Although there are other similar Apps, the selection of *WhatsApp* was motivated by its worldwide popularity. Organizers considered that it would be easier to reach people using channels that they were already using in their everyday lives. Publicity was given to this service on official websites and social networks, with this text:

News of #Alvaro14 via Whatsapp: 1. Add a new contact with the phone number +34668819562; Send a WhatsApp message with the word 'Hello'.

As the requests arrived gradually, they were grouped in packs of 200 contacts in order to send the alerts in small groups. The official *WhatsApp* account was illustrated with a photo of the future blessed.

A total of 16 messages from the organization were sent between July 28th and September 29th 2014, with increased frequency as the event drew closer: 1 message in July (the 28th); 4 in August (dates: 2nd, 12th, 15th, and 22nd); and 11 in September (dates: 1st, 5th, 9th, 14th, 17th, 21st, 23rd, 26th, 27th, 28th, and 29th). It was a one-to-many communication; given the impossibility of responding to each individual contact, the messages concluded with the sentence 'Please do not respond to

Table 4. Downloads of the ‘Álvaro del Portillo’ App
Downloads in the months prior to the beatification (data from 2014, App Store and Google Play)

	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Europe	1,686	669	868	2,794	90	37	40	6,262
Latin America	888	398	780	1,815	141	50	61	4,193
Asia Pacific	24	20	204	557	28	12	9	867
USA & Canada	193	96	324	896	78	17	32	1,659
Africa, Middle East & India	4	3	20	46	2	2	1	78
Total								25,377

this message. Thank you!’^[3]. Messages sent were very different: promotion of contents offered in other channels like the official website, Storify or Twitter (e.g. ‘We are ready to answer to your questions on our Twitter Channel http://twitter.com/alvaro14_org’); invitations to download the books to follow the religious ceremony; messages providing useful information (Spanish police or emergency contacts); or even texts requesting a donation following the link bit.ly/alvaro14donativos or sending a SMS to contribute with 1,20 €.

Figure 3 shows the evolution of contacts requests. Although *WhatsApp* is a powerful tool for communications, there is no a specific metric to evaluate its impact other than the number of contacts and their feedback, or the number of daily active users (DAU) in comparison with monthly active users (MAU).

Results

Data obtained for this case analysis were provided by the Information Office of the Beatification of Alvaro del Portillo. Despite the quantitative limitation, the data were quite relevant. As for the App, it effectively served the three aims of communications in these types of events (spiritual, organizational and touristic) as proposed in Table 2.

The first interesting set of data are the number of downloads (Table 4). The App was downloaded 25,377 times in seven months. Official sources^[4] calculate that the event of September 27th attracted 250,000 people, according to which this tool directly benefited 10% of attendees. However, that 10% was a relevant public, because - as the director of

Figure 3 : Subscriptions to the WhatssApp account ‘Alvaro del Portillo’ (April-November 2014)

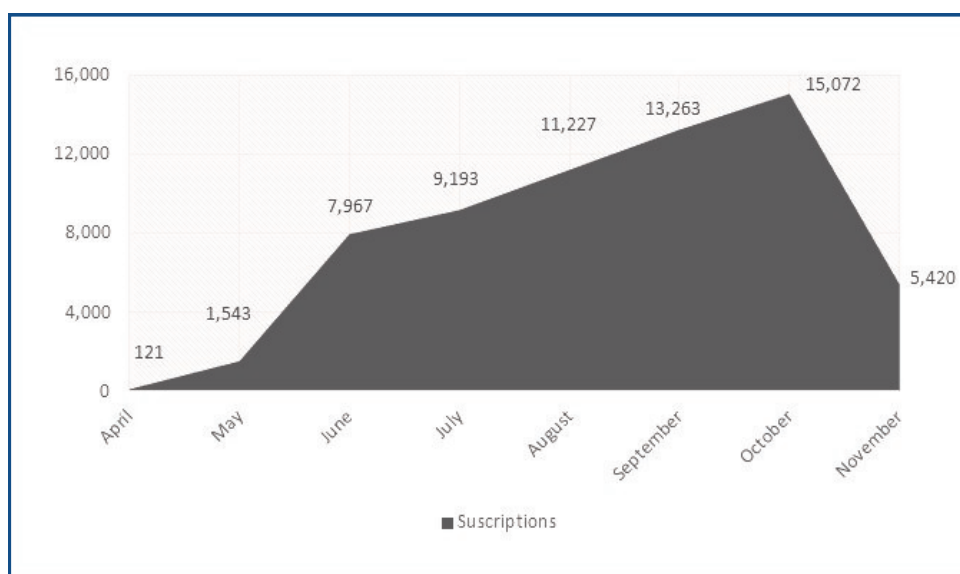


Table 5. Example of the increase in visits to the official website thanks to promotion from the ‘Alvaro del Portillo’ *WhatsApp* account.

Date	Promoted link	Visits (previous day)	Visits
Aug. 15th, 2014	/es-es/article/como-es-y-como-se-llega-a-la-sede-de-la-beatificacion-de-alvaro-del-portillo/	935	1,310
Sept. 14th, 2014	/es-es/article/informacion-sobre-las-ceremonias-de-la-beatificacion/	625	2,604
Sept. 17th, 2014	/es-es/article/el-mapa-de-valdebebas-para-la-beatificacion-de-alvaro-del-portillo/	1,831	3,858
Sept. 21st, 2014	/es-es/article/asistir-a-la-beatificacion-ahora-mas-facil/	1,431	2,345

communications affirmed in a depth-in interview - the App was promoted specially among leaders of organized groups or heads of families. In fact, as the followers of the new blessed were spread all around the world, the organizers encouraged them to organize themselves in groups (parishes, groups of prayer, catholic schools...). The group leaders were principally the ones receiving the basic information and being updated with relevant news. The data provided in Table 4 (download of the Apps ordered to month and continent) can give us an approximate idea of the origin of the pilgrims and when their interest in traveling for beatification happened.

As for the impact of the *WhatsApp* initiative, the evolution of telephone contacts which solicited information through the mIM service may be observed in Graphic 2. The interest for receiving information increased in the four months before the event. After a start with a high number of requests for contact (seven thousand from May to June), growth was stable (two thousand per month), until the end of September, and dropped immediately after the event. It is interesting, however, to point out that a considerable number of people kept connected to the official cell number after the ceremony (35% of the subscribers). This indicates an interest in keeping in touch with the organization. In fact, more news about the new blessed and Opus Dei in general were provided by the organizers in the following months.

In addition, as shown by the partial study presented in Table 5, the links to the official website of the event suggested in different messages provided via *WhatsApp*, helped to multiply visits to the site, thus increasing its informative effectiveness.

The personal impact that the App content might have on the public attending the ceremony of beatification would require other kinds of investigative approach (massive surveys, qualitative personal interviews, etc.) that go beyond the possibilities and objectives of this project.

Conclusions

The development of mobile technology allows us to dream of numerous new applications. Its usage is already very widespread in the sector of events and tourism, but this is not the case for events of a religious nature. The novelty that smartphones provide is starting to enter into mass events as information tools, but their whole organizational, touristic, and especially, spiritual capabilities have not yet been fully exploited.

As it has been shown, new tools, such as Apps or instant messaging, can contribute to the different steps and actions of event management: they can help to define the nature and frame of an event (initiation); they can transmit useful information, suggestions and requirements (planning); they can promote inscriptions and distribute documentation (coordination); offer solutions in a moment of crisis (event); and be useful for gathering feedback or creating a community after the event (closure). Some of these possibilities have been exemplified in the case study.

3) In spite of this, the interactive capability of this tool was confirmed when, on September 27th, upon the conclusion of the ceremony, a *WhatsApp* message was sent without this final remark, and more than 5,000 replies of appreciation were received in a few hours.

4) See note 2.

The analysis of this religious App linked to an event reveals that it has the capacity to develop different functions (marketing, operational, risks) and fulfil several informative aims (spiritual, touristic, organizational). At the same time, the data obtained show that the use of Apps has a positive impact on other sources of information (i.e., websites) and indicate a growing interest of event attendees during a particular period of time. It is also relevant that a significant percentage of subscribers to the mM are eager to keep in contact with the organizers after the event.

An important limitation of this work was the lack of data concerning how much the App and mM usages contributed to the economic impact (positive or negative) in the city of the event. Our results show that the faithful used the App and instant messaging to enhance the spiritual event and get practical information, improving in this way the general touristic experience. Most probably, the improvement of such experience also had positive consequences in the life of the city (cultural visits, use of transport, food consumption, souvenirs and so on).

We are aware that the analysis of a singular case - the beatification ceremony of Álvaro del Portillo - is just a small contribution in the field of mobile communication in massive religious events. Nonetheless, the results presented allow us to advocate for the enormous potential of these devices.

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